

James H. Martin, "The Daguerreian Gallery," 1851

(keywords: Orthoepist, James H. Martin, Drummond light, history of the daguerreotype, history of photography.)

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James H. Martin, *The Orthoepist: Containing a Selection of All Those Words of the English Language Usually Pronounced Improperly, with a Reading Exercise Following Each Letter*. . . (New York: A. S. Barnes & Co., 1851): 33, 37–39.

[The following lines are the first two entries in the "D" vocabulary appearing on page 33]:

DA-GUERRE'I-AN, (da-ger're-an,) a. Pertaining to Daguerre, or his invention of the daguerreotype.

DA-GUERRE'O-TYPE, (da-ger'o-type,) n. A method of fixing images of objects by the camera obscura.

[The following paragraphs are the "reading exercise" for the letter "D" on pages 37–39]:

THE DAGUERREIAN GALLERY.

THE demand for daguerreotypes has, of late, given quite an impetus to this branch of the fine arts. Its demonstrable superiority over all other modes, in giving a true and life-like impression, is no longer a disputable question. I shall disarm disputants of all suspicions of my own disinterestedness, in a most decisive manner, when I refuse to designate or divulge the name of the artist, in whose gallery we spent a brief half hour, taking a desultory view of all we could discern.

Presuming the reader to have a reasonable detestation of too much detail, we shall not be so discourteous as to disoblige him, by assuming the function of the doughty diatribist on the present occasion.

The first we observed was in a disadvantageous light, and represented a group at the dinner-table, partaking of the dessert which the waiter had begun to distribute. A decrepit gentleman seemed to enjoy the process of deglutition, while it was quite evident that his teeth had been unused to the action of dentifrice.

The image of a dishonest diplomatic individual next attracted our attention. It is said that he was disfranchised for the dishonorable deficit of ten thousand ducats which was detected in his accounts. It appears that his conscience was sufficiently ductile to enable him to conceal a draft of the above amount, and to disown with disdain all knowledge of the embezzlement, and to regard his disfranchisement as of little consequence.

It is demonstrably certain, by the distich appended to the design, that the person with the dolorous countenance in the act of taking a douche bath in the Doric structure, to improve the diathesis of his system, had met with a disaster which dislocated one of his

limbs; or perhaps a draught of that despicable liquor which, we trust, is rapidly going into desuetude, may have had something to do with his present condition.

The most striking piece in the collection was a scene laid in Mexico, representing an army making preparations to debouch from a dangerous defile, where masses of debris, composed of disintegrated rock, that had taken the sun and atmosphere a long time to disintegrate, were precipitated with such a detonation or report, as to daunt the heart of any one capable of being daunted. The effects of the disaster were of such a demonstrative character as to devastate the country, depreciate the value of property, and cause the demise of many distinguished individuals.

Previous to our departure, our attention was arrested by the grotesque figure of a dramatist, instructing a debutant how to make his debut in the divertisement as a Dominican friar, riding on a dromedary, soliciting donative offering from a dilettante, with a dahlia in his hand, and in the act of stepping from a French diligence.

The flash of the Drummond light, which came in at the windows, would dissolve and discomfit the lurking darkness so suddenly as almost to cause a deprivation of sight.

[End of selected text.]

EDITOR'S NOTES:

This same text appears in the 1854 edition of the same title.

For more about the four-syllable pronunciation of the word "daguerreotype," see "The Spelling Bee," *Evening Star* no. 3932 (Dunedin, New Zealand) (1 October 1875): 3.¹

1. http://www.daguerreotypearchive.org/texts/N8750001_SPELLING-BEE_EVENING-STAR_1875-10-01.pdf

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